

A Blue Whale *Baelonoptera musculus* stranded near Warrnambool, Victoria.

BY A.C. ISLES*

On 6 April 1976 an immature male Blue Whale *Baelonoptera musculus* was stranded at Levys Point (142°26'E 38°23'S), 4 km west of Warrnambool. It was first sighted, still alive, at about 1600 hours by Mr E. Barker of Warrnambool (Warrnambool Standard, 7 April 1976). Diagnostic features were the all black baleen, blue body colour with paler mottled patches on the dorsal surface, white underside to the flippers (see Morzer Bruyns 1971; Wakefield 1967) and distinctive, broad, "boat-shaped" skull (R.M. Warneke *pers. comm.*).

At about 0930 hours next day the animal was apparently dead and by the afternoon its body colour had changed to dark grey. There were no noticeable lesions, barnacles or ectoparasites on the skin.

The following measurements (see Baker 1972) were taken using a 100 foot cloth tape measure.

Total length (tip of jaw to notch of tail flukes)	19.1m
Tip of upper jaw to centre of eye	3.9m
Tip of upper jaw to anterior insertion of flipper	3.7m
Tip of upper jaw to tip of dorsal fin	14.6m
Girth (measurement taken directly behind flipper; 7.5m from upper jaw to point of girth measurement).	c4.5m

Maximum flipper width	0.71m
Tip of one tail fluke to centre of tail notch	2.18m

It was not possible to measure tail flukes from tip to tip; a reasonable

estimate of this measure would therefore be 4.4m.

Depth of notch between flukes	0.23m
Height of dorsal fin (tip to base)	0.18m

On the 10 April staff from Monash University Zoology Department and the National Museum of Victoria attempted to remove the skull, but could only remove the lower jaw (now in the NMV No. C23571) and one flipper (in the possession of the Zoology Department, Monash University; No. 5579). By the 17 April very little of the whale was left on the beach except for some baleen, pieces of flesh, and skull fragments. Most of the carcass had been taken out to sea by a high tide and the remaining debris was probably a product of the field dissection. On the 20 June a few remains, including the tail flukes and part of the vertebral column, were found some 6 km from the original stranding point, 500 m east of the Cutting (142°23'E, 38°21'S) high up on the beach and buried in sand.

Wakefield (1967) gives details of three other Blue Whales stranded in Victoria: at Jan Juk, outside Port Phillip Heads



Fig. 1. Blue whale stranded at Levys Pt.

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in the winter of 1865 or 1866; at Anglesea April 1955; and at the mouth of the Fitzroy River, Portland, 1957.

Colour transparencies and 16mm film taken when the animal was still alive are in the possession of Fisheries and Wildlife Division, Victoria.

Acknowledgements

Joan Dixon, Curator of Vertebrates, NMV for providing literature when urgently needed and commenting on the paper; R.M. Warneke and P.W. Menkhorst for commenting on the paper and offering valuable suggestions.

Also to W. Smith and R. Thompson for assistance in the measuring of the whale.

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Fig. 2. View of the whale.



Fig. 3. Viscera of the whale.

Alterations and Additions to the Vascular Flora of Victoria

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Introduction

In earlier issues of the *Victorian Naturalist*[†], I dealt with about 300 alterations in nomenclature and 330 additional species to the vascular flora of Victoria.

This paper deals with a further 100 alterations and 60 additional species. This has been largely due to the splendid continued co-operation of my many helpers who have kept me posted with current revisions from scientific papers both within and outside Australia, plus my own observations and records.

Recording on the Grid system of Churchill and de Corona (1972) has

been maintained by a number of workers, with the result about 1150 additions have been made since 1977 thus making a grand total of about 7300 additions since 1972. However, on the debit side, I, along with help from others have recognized about 518 grids[†] which have been considered erroneous or very doubtful. These should be taken into account when species totals are being made for individual grids at some future date.

[†] see *Victorian Nat.* 95: 67-74 and 198-203 (1978)

^{††} see *Victorian Nat.* 97: Previous articles (1980)

Acknowledgements

I again wish to thank the Directors

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